



Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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State Department of Agriculture begins spartina treatments for 2012 season

OLYMPIA – The treatment season for eradicating spartina will start June 1 and continue through October, the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) announced today. Survey and eradication efforts this year will take place in Grays Harbor, Hood Canal, Willapa Bay, Puget Sound, the north and west sides of the Olympic Peninsula and the mouth of the Columbia River.

Spartina, commonly known as cordgrass, is an aggressive noxious weed that severely disrupts the ecosystems of native saltwater estuaries in Washington. If left unchecked, spartina outcompetes native vegetation and converts ecologically productive mudflats into solid spartina meadows. The invasive species destroys important migratory shorebird and waterfowl habitat, increases the threat of flooding and impacts the state's shellfish industry.

Spartina eradication efforts have been extremely effective over the past nine years. The infested area has plummeted from a high of over 9,000 acres in 2003 to an estimated seven acres this year.

In 2012, project partners expect to survey over 80,000 acres of saltwater estuaries and more than 1,000 miles of shoreline in 14 counties. WSDA and other cooperators will use techniques such as digging out small infestations, or treating larger sites with the herbicides glyphosate and imazapyr. The state's goal is to uncover new infestations and prevent spartina from returning to eradicated areas.

"The cooperative effort to eradicate spartina is saving some of the state's most productive shoreline habitat from certain loss," said Brad White, manager for WSDA's Pest Program. "Because of our success in combating this invasive species, activity has shifted from large-scale eradication to the critical, detailed work of detection and targeted eradication."

Since 1995, the Washington State Department of Agriculture has served as the lead state agency for [spartina eradication](#). WSDA facilitates the continued cooperation of local, state, federal and tribal governments; universities; interested groups; and private landowners.

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